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ABSTRACT

The urbanization of the black population is a relatively recent phenomenon. Historically, migration has been the major source of the growth of the black population in the large cities of the North, yet the migration from nonmetropolitan to metropolitan areas has been going long enough to have established a substantial black population in the cities--blacks now account for about 21 percent of the total for central cities, and substantially higher fractions in some of them. The migrant population is a relatively young one, as is normal for rural-urban migration, and population growth resulting from an excess of births over deaths is an increasingly important element in the growth of this population group. The indications are that the black population of the central cities is increasing though at a rate less than that during the late 1960's and that it will continue to increase. The migration from nonmetropolitan areas to the central cities is greater than that from the central cities to nonmetropolitan areas. The volume of movement between suburban areas and nonmetropolitan areas is relatively small, and the moves in one direction virtually offset the moves in the other. The prospects are that the population will become even more a metropolitan area population, and for the near future, it is likely to remain primarily a population in the central cities of the larger metropolitan areas. (Author/AM)

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The Growth of the Black Metropolitan Population*

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DuBois pioneer study, entitled The Philadelphia Negro, was carried out in the late 1890s. At that time the city had about 40,000 Negroes which was a little less than 4 percent of the city's total population. In his report, DuBois modestly suggests that to secure a trustworthy picture of Negro city life, it would be desirable to study Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, Atlanta, New Orleans and Galveston in the same way as he did Philadelphia. No doubt a similar list for 1970 would be somewhat different.

That study was based on interviews with households in one ward. It found that only about one fourth of the persons 21 and over who reported their place of birth had been born in Philadelphia or elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Accordingly, three fourths of that number were migrants into the city. More than half had come from the nearby states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia or the District of Columbia. One eighth reported that they had come from other southern states. That migration was largely a migration of individuals rather than of families - 83 percent of the children under 10 had been born in Philadelphia. DuBois reported that there was evidence of migration by stages, with migrants from southern states passing through Norfolk, Richmond, Washington and Baltimore on their way to Philadelphia. Although Philadelphia had long had Negro residents, a large share of them at the time of this study were migrants from other areas.

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1. W.E.B. DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro, Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1899. xx + 520 pp.

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Eighty years later, in 1970, there were 654,000 black residents in Philadelphia, about one third of the total population. The majority were long time residents of the city. About three fifths of them had been born in Pennsylvania and approximately one fourth reported a birthplace in the South. However, the southern born persons were not recent migrants. More than four fifths of them had been living in Philadelphia for at least five years. Natural increase was the source of about three fourths of the growth between 1960 and 1970.

Historically, migration has been the major source of the growth of the black population in the large cities of the North. In discussing the black population of New York City in 1932, Kiser could write:

> "Harlem is a city of Negro migrants. Few of the adults living in New York's black belt are natives of Manhattan and few are white. Some of the dusky inhabitants came directly from the West Indies, from the Azores, and even from Africa. But for the most part, the grown-up black folk who walk Lenox and Seventh Avenues above 125th Street once trod the furrows in the cotton fields of the South."[2]

Here too, there was a significant change by 1970, for at the latter date only about one fourth of the blacks living in the city had been born in the South. No doubt many of those migrants had come from urban rather than rural areas in the South, and a large proportion has been living in the city for some time.

Today a larger proportion of the black than of the white population live in metropolitan areas. Three fourths of the black population

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2. Clyde Kiser, Sea Island to City, Columbia University Press, New York. 1932. 272 pp.

of the United States are living in metropolitan areas, the great majority within the central cities and not in the suburbs. It is a large-city population, in contrast to the white population; the proportion living in the central cities of the metropolitan areas is twice as high among the black as among the white population. In the North and West more than 90 percent of the black population is in metropolitan areas, and even in the South the 1970 Census shows that half of the black population was in metropolitan areas. In that region the metropolitan areas had about the same proportion of whites and blacks, but the central cities had a substantially higher proportion of blacks than of whites.

The urbanization of the black population is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the beginning of the century, when some 90% of the black population was living in the South, three fourths of the black residents lived in rural areas. The black population of the North has consistently been predominantly urban. As recently as 1940 more than half the black population was still classified as rural. It was 1960 before more than half the Southern black population was living in urban areas. When the Urban League was founded in 1911, one of its early concerns was to assist the rural migrants in the big cities in making the necessary adjustments. The movement northward which was stimulated by World War I and subsequent developments was essentially a movement into the big cities of the North. When large numbers began to go west, they too focussed on the big cities. At the same time, there was a significant migration from the rural areas of the South into its growing metropolitan centers.

Between 1900 and 1920 the black population of the central cities within the SMSAs of 1960 increased by 86 percent. During the next twenty years, ending in 1940, the rate of increase was almost as large. But during the 20 years ending in 1960 their numbers more than doubled, increasing by 123 percent. The white population in these cities was also growing but much less rapidly.

Between 1960 and 1970 the black population of central cities increased by 3.3 million persons (33 percent). This increase more than offset the loss of whites from these areas during the decade and, as a group, these cities continued to increase their population, though many individual cities, especially the larger ones, lost population. The rate of increase was greatest in the large cities; those with a population of 1 million or more increased their black population by 40 percent, which was double the rate of growth in the cities with fewer than 1 million inhabitants. The Census Bureau estimates that the black population of central cities continued to increase between 1970 and 1973, growing by about 5 percent but that during the same period the white population of these cities declined by nearly 5 percent.

Between 1960 and 1970 the national rate of increase was exceeded in the Northeast and West. The rate in the North Central States was approximately equal to that for the nation as a whole, but that of the central cities in the South was significantly less than the national rate. There were substantial increases in the black population of central cities in nearly every State which includes a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area except for Alabama and South Dakota. In South Carolina

the increase amounted to less than 1 percent. Decreases in the black population outside the metropolitan areas were reported for nearly every State.

Obviously changes of these magnitudes involved a substantial amount of redistribution of the population. Immigration of blacks from other countries during these decades was too small to have any significant numerical impact. Even in New York City only about 5 percent of the black population had come from abroad between 1965 and 1970. But the migration from non-metropolitan to metropolitan areas has been going on long enough to have established a substantial black population in these cities - blacks now account for about 21 percent of the total for central cities, and substantially higher fractions in some of them. The migrant population is a relatively young one, as is normal for rural-urban migration, and population growth resulting from an excess of births over deaths is an increasingly important element in the growth of this population group. In 1970, 53 percent of the black population in the Central Cities were under 25 years of age - for the white population the comparable percentage was 42. Conversely, 23 percent of the white, but only 13 percent of the black population in the central cities were 55 years old or over.

Although there was a substantial migration from non-metropolitan to metropolitan areas, more than half of the increase was the result of the excess of births over deaths during the decade. For the Northeastern States, net migration contributed somewhat more than the excess of births over deaths. But for the metropolitan areas of the North Central states;

the excess of births over deaths in the black population was greater than the net migration by a third. In the Southern metropolitan areas the gain by natural increase was almost ten times as much as that by net migration.

For the Central cities with more than a quarter of a million blacks in 1970, the gains between 1960 and 1970 were generally so large that net migration played an important role in the growth, but the situation was not uniform.

	Black population in 1970	Percent of Increase 1960-1970	Percent gain by natural increase without migration
New York	1,668,175	53.3	23.4
Chicago	1,102,620	35.6	24.9
Detroit	660,428	37.0	18.0
Philadelphia	653,791	23.6	17.8
Washington	537,712	30.5	21.5
Los Angeles Long Beach	503,606	46.4	26.0
Baltimore	420,210	32.0	20.0
Houston	316,551	47.2	25.3
Cleveland	287,841	14.7	16.8
New Orleans	267,308	14.2	19.4
Atlanta	255,051	37.1	19.7
St. Louis	254,191	18.3	19.5

The increases in Cleveland, New Orleans and St. Louis were entirely due to the excess of births over deaths, for during the decade each of these three cities had a very small net out-migration of blacks. The contributions of natural increase and migration were approximately equal in Atlanta, Detroit, Houston and Los Angeles. Natural increase accounted for approximately two thirds of the g rowth in Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington. New York is the only city in this group in which the gain by migration substantially exceeded that by natural increase.

A part of the migration of blacks to New York came from other countries.

In nearly all other cities with a black population of 100,000 or more, the increase due to the excess of births over deaths was greater than or approximately equal to the increase due to migration.

The situation in the 1960's is a relatively new one for most of these large cities. However in New York net migration was the dominant element in each of the decades, 1940-1950, 1950-1960, and 1960-1970. In Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Washington, net migration was the dominant element in the two decades preceding 1960. In Atlanta, net migration was dominant in the 1950s, but not in the 1940s. In St. Louis, however, the natural increase of the black population was the dominant element in the growth of that city's black population in each of the three decades.

The rate of migration from non metropolitan to metropolitan areas was less during the 1960s than it had been during the 1950s and 1940s. There are indications that there has continued to be some net migration of blacks to central cities in the early years of the 1970s, and there was a net migration from non metropolitan areas as a whole for the period March 1970-March 1973. The indications are that the black population of the central cities is increasing, though at a rate less than that during the 1960s, and that it will continue to increase. Even if there were to be no net migration into these larger cities, the rate of natural increase of the black population and the potential for further increase is high enough to sustain continued growth of that sector of the population.

In every city which has 100,000 black residents or more, the number of children ever born to black women by the end of the childbearing period is higher than the number needed to replace the population. In most instances this number indicates a substantial potential for increase of the population. These rates are consistently higher than the rates for the white population of the same cities. The age composition in 1970 was such that continued increase of the population in the prime childbearing ages is assured through the 1970s, barring substantial migration out of these cities. As the women who were between 20 and 29 years of age move into their thirties, they will be replaced by a larger number of women, i.e. those who were 10-19 years old in 1970. The increase, assuming no net migration, is relatively small for New York and Washington, but it is abov e 10 percent for Atlanta and Los Angeles-Long Beach, and it approaches 25 percent in Houston. It is between 25 and 50 percent for Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, and Philadelphia and exceeds 50 percent in Cleveland and St. Louis. As this larger cohort of women moves into the prime childbearing years, they can reasonably be expected to contribute enough births to maintain an excess of births over deaths, particularly in view of the relative lack of elderly persons in the black population of these central cities. A similar comparison of the age cohorts, 20-29 and 10-19 for other cities with at least 50,000 blacks indicates a substantial increase of persons in their twenties between 1970 and 1980. In most of these cities the increase would be more than 25 percent, with a substantial number showing gains of 50-74 percent.

In Birmingham and Charleston, S.C., under the conditions stated, the increase would be in excess of 75 percent, and in Mobile, Alabama, there would be almost a doubling of that age group in the ten year period. The expected growth rates for this age group are especially high in the Southern cities.

Forecasts for individual cities are especially subject to error; birth rates could drop sharply, especially among the women in their early twenties, and some cities might be subjected to especially high rates of migration, in or out. If the suburbs were to become accessible to more black residents the numbers in the central cities could be affected. The Census Bureau reports that between March 1970 and March 1973 the movement of blacks from central cities to suburbs was somewhat larger than the movement of blacks from suburbs to the central cities, 554,000 compared with 491,000. These numbers are relatively small, considering the base populations involved, and are subject to some sampling and reporting errors. They do not indicate any significant change from the patterns observed in the past. The rate of increase of the suburban black population since 1970 was about the same as the rate of increase of the white population in these areas. The two rates of growth were also approximately the same in the 1960s. The result is that the proportion of suburban populations which are black has remained virtually unchanged, at nearly 5 percent.

The migration from non metropolitan areas to the central cities was greater than that from the central cities to non metropolitan areas.

The volume of movement between suburban areas and non metropolitan areas was relatively small and the moves in one direction virtually offset the moves in the other.

Birth rates are falling for both the black and the white population; and the pool of potential migrants in the rural South has been sharply reduced by the migrations of the past. Migration from non-metropolitan to metropolitan areas has been less in recent years than in earlier periods. Nonetheless, there is reason to expect the black population of the larger cities to continue to increase. The relative youth of the black population of the central cities, and the normal increase in the number of persons in prime childbearing ages give a basis for expecting a continued excess of births over deaths in the black population of these cities. This alone will be a substantial source of increase of their black population. Some blacks undoubtedly will parallel the white outmigration to the suburbs. There is evidence of a recent small net migration of blacks from the North and West to the South. Nevertheless, natives of large cities in the past have shown a significant resistance to any movement into rural areas, and there is no basis for assuming that the black natives of large cities will react differently.

The majority of the black populations in the large cities were born in the State in which they live. For example, two thirds of the black residents of Philadelphia were born in Pennsylvania. Only in Los Angeles, among the 6 largest black populations, does the proportion who were born in the State of residence fall below 50, to 42 percent. The majority of the black residents of these cities have lived in the same city for some time. More than ninety percent of the Southern born heads of families

who are residents of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago were living in their cities in 1965; for Detroit and Washington the proportions are nearly 90 percent, and only in the case of Los Angeles does it drop as low as 83 percent. This degree of residential stability gives further support to the expectation that black populations of these cities are well established in their present cities of residence. They and their descendants are likely to be the major source of future growth.

This relatively youthful population has a higher fertility rate than that of their white counterparts in the cities. Among ever married women 15-24 years old, for example, the number of children ever born is 13-41 percent above that for the city as a whole in the 6 cities with large black populations. The higher level of fertility, coupled with a relatively large proportion of the population at young adult ages, suggests a relatively large excess of births over deaths in the immediate future, even though fertility rates generally decline.

Exchange of population among SMSAs has become an important component of the streams of migration in the United States. The black population has shared in this development. For the SMSAs with 1 million inhabitants or more, migrants from other SMSAs were more numerous than migrants from non metropolitan areas during the last half of the 1960s. Some of the newcomers to the black population of any central city, therefore, are persons who came from another central city, and only a fraction of the newcomers are persons who came directly from non metropolitan areas.

Migration from non metropolitan areas to the central cities was at one time the major source of growth of the black population in those

The 1967 Survey of Economic Opportunity provides further evidence regarding the extent to which the black population of central cities is indigenous to those areas. Gladys Bowles and her colleagues have divided residents of these cities into those who are of urban origin and those who are of rural origin. Residents of urban origin include migrants who came to the central cities from other urban places as well as persons who have always lived in these areas. Among the black family heads the number who report an urban origin is about three times as numerous as those who report a rural origin. For all persons 14 and over the number of persons of urban origin is 3.7 times that of the number who report a rural origin. It is higher for those persons who are 17-29 years old. For the age group 14-16 years old the ratio is nearly 17 persons of urban origin for every person who reported a rural origin. The fact that migrants have gone to the larger central cities in preference to the smaller ones is reflected in the fact that the ratio of "indigenous" urban residents to rural migrants in these cities is highest in the smaller central cities.[2]

2. Gladys Bowles, A. Lloyd Bacon, and P. Neal Ritchey. Poverty Dimensions of Rural to Urban Migration. Economic Research Service Statistical Bulletin 511, Washington, D.C., 1973

large cities. However as the migrant population has become established in the cities, they have also contributed to city growth through an excess of births over deaths. Natural increase rather than migration was the more important source of growth of the black central city population in the 1960s. Even with the declining rate of migration into these cities, their black population is likely to increase, for they are likely to continue to have a significant excess of births over deaths. More than three fourths of the black population now lives in metropolitan areas, primarily in the central cities.

Rural populations become urban populations more readily than urban populations turn into rural populations. The prospects are that the black population will become even more a metropolitan area population, and for the near future it is likely to remain primarily a population in the central cities of the larger metropolitan areas. Migration from non metropolitan and essentially rural areas will be of less importance in this process than it was in the past.

TABLE I

AREA OF BIRTH OF BLACK HEADS OF FAMILIES -- 1970

Area of birth	New York	Chicago	Detroit	Philadelphia	Washington	Los Angeles
Total	394,222	244,286	151,032	147,538	120,879	117,789
State of residence	127,272	76,008	37,896	57,059	39,305	16,239
North	12,413	9,636	7,921	4,123	4,781	11, 103
South	143,119	128,737	86,691	60,608	53,839[1]	73,299
(living in city -1965)	(134,871)	(117,895)	(75,676)	(56,904)	(47,824)	(60,772)
West	674	586	359	205	143	1,222[2]
Abroad	69,404	2,102	1,205	1,625	2,005	2,305
Not reported	41,340	27,217	16,960	23,909	20,806	13,621

1) Excluding Washington, D.C.

2) Excluding California

SOURCE: 1970 Census of Population PC(2) 2C - Mobility for Metropolitan Areas